



APPENDIX B

Replacement Pages of Amended Specification

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DEC 26 2002
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Licensed or otherwise authorized to perform intellectual property services in one or more target jurisdictions. The intellectual property service portal is coupled by the network to the originating and target nodes and is responsive to a selection at the originating node of at least one intellectual property service, supplying the originating node with particularized fees for the selected at least one intellectual property service. The intellectual property service portal is further responsive to initiation, from the originating node, of the selected at least one intellectual property service, transacting the particularized fees coincident therewith.

In still yet another embodiment in accordance with the present invention, a computer program product is encoded in a computer readable medium. The computer program product includes selection code and fee transaction code. The selection code is executable to select from amongst one or more intellectual property services supported by one or more information services therefor. The fee transaction code is executable to transact one of more fees associated with the selected one or more intellectual property services coincident with performance thereof by a corresponding one or ones of the information services. The selection code and fee transaction code may or may not be executable on the same processor.

In still yet another embodiment in accordance with the present invention, an intellectual property filing preparation system includes means for selecting from amongst one or more intellectual property services; means for initiating performance of the selected one or more intellectual property services; and means for transacting fees coincident with the performance of the selected one or more intellectual property services.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

The present invention may be better understood, and its numerous objects, features, and advantages made apparent to those skilled in the art by referencing the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 is a block diagram depicting functional relationships between originating filers, an intellectual property filing portal, associates (including foreign

filings for more than one target jurisdiction. Similarly, more than one associate and hence more than one networked information server may service a given target jurisdiction. For example, in the illustration of **FIG. 1**, associated system **132** offers filing services for the United Kingdom through **UKPO 151** and for European Patent Convention filings through **EPO 141**. In contrast, associate **131** offers filing services only for the United Kingdom.

Typically, a law firm will have the option of interacting with intellectual property filing portal **110** both as an originating filer and as an associate. For example, the information systems **131** of an illustrated UK associate services filings into United Kingdom Patent Office **151** but also interacts with intellectual property filing portal **110** as an originating filer to allow filings via intellectual property filing portal **110** as described above (e.g., in German Patent Office **152** via information systems **133** of the illustrated German associate). Accordingly, although the intellectual property filing system is illustrated in the context of single direction flows of filings, persons of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that, at least in some realizations, intellectual property filing portal **110** provides a fully bi-directional filing capability.

Referring now to **FIG. 2**, a single originating filer application is illustrated executing on workstation **221**. In an illustrative configuration, the originating filer application communicates with an intellectual property filing portal **210** implemented as an information service executing on a networked information server via a communication network, e.g., World Wide Web, preferably a public, packet-switched data network with Virtual Private Networking (VPN) support. In the illustration of **FIG. 2**, two intellectual property filings are processed. Each is transacted via the network and intellectual property filing portal **210**; however the first is filed **209A** with European Patent Office **241** and **209B** with Japanese Patent Office **253** after being transacted with information systems **231** and **234** of respective European and Japanese associates. The second is transacted without an associate intermediary and is filed **209C** directly in the United States Patent and Trademark office acting as receiving office **242** under the Patent Cooperation Treaty.

A foreign filing session is initiated (**201**) by authenticating and requesting target jurisdiction and associate information from intellectual property filing portal

filing documents to the appropriate associates for filing. Preferably, the forwarding is in computer readable form so that, if available in the corresponding target jurisdiction, filings can be made electronically by the corresponding associates. However, for at least some associates and presently for all patent offices, it is expected that filing documents will be transmitted in hard copy form. Intellectual property filing portal **210** maintains as part of its associate registrations a computer readable encoding of suitable transmission means.

In a representative configuration, target- and associate-specific requirements, including form documents, formal requirements and fee schedules supplied (**205**) by intellectual property filing portal **210** are previously supplied (**251A**, **251B**, **252**) in computer readable form by respective associates and/or targets. Alternatively, such information may be maintained by the respective associates and retrieved on demand by intellectual property filing portal **210** in response a particular user's foreign filing session. Suitable storage configurations for target- and associate-specific requirements data may vary from associate to associate.

Associate data, including name, address, registration numbers, e-mail or other electronic information service address, telephone and facsimile numbers, etc. may be supplied by the intellectual property filing portal to populate a generic set of form documents for each of the selected target jurisdictions. Alternatively, or for at least some associates and/or jurisdiction, form documents particular to a specific associate may be obtained by, or stored in a data store accessible to, the intellectual property filing portal.

FIG. 3 illustrates exemplary originating filer side data and control flows in an intellectual property filing configuration in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. Specifically, after initiating a session with the filing portal, the originating filer side application performs, for each matter to be foreign filed, a selection of target jurisdiction and of associate. In each case, an encoding of target jurisdictions and associates is supplied by intellectual property filing portal **310**. Once target jurisdictions and associates are selected, the originating filer side application requests corresponding fee quotations. If the fees quoted by intellectual property filing portal **310** are approved, a fee transaction is authorized (e.g., by debit account, wire transfer, etc.) and preparation of formal document is begun. If not, the

Based on data retrieved (402) from a database, e.g., that of document system 423, the annuity payment application identifies payments meeting user definable temporal or other criteria (e.g., client, payment type, due date, etc.) and presents the user with a set of payments for selection (or deselection). In realizations in which parameterized fee data 411 is supplied, the annuity payment application may also calculate and present exact or estimated fees to facilitate user decisions. Based on this presentation, the user of workstation 421 selects (404) a particular set of payments to be made in target jurisdiction(s). Where required, the selection includes a designated agent as an associate. In the illustrated case, the user selects three payments from amongst three or more possible payments matching the user definable criteria. In particular, the user selects a first payment (e.g., for an application pending in the Canadian Patent Office), a second payment (e.g., for an EPC application pending in the European Patent Office) and a third payment (e.g., for a issued U.S. Patent). In response to the user's selection (404), intellectual property annuity portal 410 may selectively supply (405) workstation 421 with target- and associate-specific form document such as powers of attorney, if required. In some realizations, fee and/or cost information initially supplied (e.g., at 403) is now confirmed or more precisely calculated and supplied (405) to workstation 421.

In any case, the user authorizes (406) the making of the selected set of payments. Fees are transacted (412) as between the authorizing user (or his/her organization) and intellectual property annuity portal 410 coincident with the authorization. In some realizations, the transaction is initiated (412A) from workstation 421. In others, transaction is initiated from intellectual property annuity portal 410 in response to authorization 406. In general, fees are transacted using a payment system 422 which may include pre-authorized electronic funds transfers between financial institutions, credit card authorizations, etc. In some realizations, fees are transacted at least in part by debiting a user's deposit account or accounts with the intellectual property annuity portal organization and/or with a particular target jurisdiction or associate. In some realizations, payment systems may include target jurisdictions and/or associates and payments to particular systems may include target jurisdictions and/or associates and payments to particular target jurisdictions and associates may also be made (412B) coincident with authorization 406. However, in other realizations, authorized payments may be made independently or through alternate payment system facilities.

Typically, form documents, if any, are supplied in a computer readable encoding such that application software on workstation **421** may populate the documents with matter specific data (e.g., docket data, originating agent data, etc.) retrieved from a data store. As before, particular implementations may employ local and/or remote stores, network information services, file servers, and/or applications with callable interfaces such as database management systems, docket systems (e.g., docket system **423**), document management systems, etc.

In some realizations, software executing on workstation **421** transmits (**407**) target jurisdiction- and/or associate-specific documents (e.g., executed powers of attorney) to intellectual property annuity portal **410** coincident with authorization **406**. Preferably, such documents are transmitted to intellectual property annuity portal **410** in electronic form. However, in some configurations, some of the documents are printed (e.g., using printer **424**), signed and transferred in hardcopy form to the intellectual property annuity payment facility or corresponding associate. In situations where original signatures are required, an overnight courier may be employed. Alternatively, if consistent with the requirements of a particular target jurisdiction, signed formal papers may be faxed (**407A**) from fax machine **426**, or scanned (**425**) and transmitted (**407**) electronically, to intellectual property annuity portal **410** or to the corresponding associate. Preferably, signed form papers are scanned and transmitted in a manner that unambiguously associates them with authorization **406**. For example, in one suitable realization, transmission **407** and authorization **406** are implemented as a single combined information transaction. In one such implementation, a scanned image (or images) of signed formal papers is (are) supplied as an attachment to authorization message encoded as email.

Intellectual property annuity portal **410** receives (**407**) the user's authorization from workstation **421** and, in turn through not necessarily immediately, initiates payments (e.g., **408B** and **408C**) in the target jurisdictions corresponding to selected payments. In situations where an authorized in-country agent is required, payment (e.g., **409**) may be initiated (e.g., **408A**) via the selected associate (e.g., **431**). Preferably, each of the payments is initiated in electronic form although any payment system is generally suitable for transactions as between intellectual property annuity portal **410** and the target jurisdiction or associate. However, for at least some associates and presently